

REMARKS

By this paper, claims 9 and 72 have been amended and claim 90 has been canceled. Claims 9-13, 15, 29-46, 48, 49, 56, 61, 62, 70, 72-79 and 87-89 and 91-93 are pending.

In the outstanding Office action, the disclosure was objected to due to an informality. In response thereto, Applicants have amended the paragraph of the specification beginning at page 19, line 12 to identify reference numeral 79 in place of reference numeral 49. As such, it is believed that the objection to the disclosure has been traversed.

Additionally, Applicants have canceled claim 90 and thus it is believed that the objection thereto and rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph have been traversed.

In the outstanding Office action, claims 9-13, 15, 29-33, 35-40, 42, 56, 61, 62, 70, 72, 88-90, 92 and 93 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by or in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Kugler et al. (6,280,466). Additionally, claims 34, 43-46, 48, 49 and 73-79 were rejected under § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kugler et al. and claims 41, 87 and 91 were rejected under § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kugler et al. in view of Dehdashtian et al. (6,368,345).

It is respectfully submitted, however, that amended independent claims 9 and 72 as well as their respective dependent claims recite subject matter which is patentable over the cited art. In rejecting the pending claims, while referencing to Figs. 3b and 6a the Examiner defined an opening of graft component 45 as "a circle that intersects the lowest point of each V-shaped opening between the triangular tabs and which extends across the base of the triangular tabs." A close examination of the structures depicted in Figs. 3b and 6a clearly reveals that members 53c and 53d of stent 50 support portions of the "opening" defined by the Examiner. As such, the Kugler et al. graft component is supported at its "opening." Accordingly, the Kugler et al. reference does not teach the subject matter recited in independent claims 9 and 72 which require

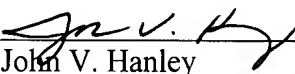
an opening of the graft component lacking other structure supporting a portion of an opening circumference. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that each of claims 9-13, 15, 29-46, 48, 49, 56, 61, 62, 70, 72-79, 87-89 and 91-93 are allowable over the cited art.

CONCLUSION

Applicants have attempted to completely respond to the rejections set forth in the outstanding Office action. In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests that the application be reconsidered, the claims allowed and the application passed to issue.

Respectfully submitted,

FULWIDER PATTON LLP



John V. Hanley
Registration No. 38,171

JVH/kst
Fulwider Patton Lee & Utecht, LLP
Howard Hughes Center
6060 Center Drive, Tenth Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90045
Tele.: (310) 824-5555
Fax: (310) 824-9696
Customer No. 24201
113249.1